1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
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and is not to be treated as if he were the mere husband of a kinswoman. Indeed, all marital affairs of chiefs tend to have political significance; they are much discussed in the tribe and are the particular concern of senior lieutenants of counties. A recent incident illustrates how in relations with his affines a chief is bound by the instructions of his political advisers. A chief hit his wife while drinking beer in her brother's house. Her father reprimanded him. At a meeting held to discuss the quarrel, the county lieutenants and a kinsman of the chief, his father's deputy, ordered the woman's father to pay two beasts to the chief. The chief himself said nothing. A week or so later the man offered the beasts to the chief who said he did not want them. Just over a year later the chief's kinsman complained to the chief that the beast[13] had not been paid. The chief replied that he did not want the cattle and that at the meeting he had wanted his wife's father to be merely cautioned. His kinsman said that despite this he would call the lieutenants who had taken the original decision and get them to ask the woman's father why he had not paid. Hearing this, the man offered a beast which was accepted.[13]

Thus it is the chief in his position as head of a major segment and a county who is honoured with beer and whose marriages are protected, and not the chief as a bibulous aristocrat. The chief himself does not drink all, or even any, of the beer presented to him but he is responsible for dispensing it. A chief who acts like a commoner and wanders through his villages seeking beer risks the reprimands of his lieutenants, for it is difficult to refuse a chief beer under those conditions. A chief should not visit his people's villages unless they invite him, or unless he has at least warned them of his intention.

The gifts received by a chief from returned labour migrants are sometimes cited as a *modern form of tribute*, but while these presents may be more expensive in pecuniary terms than beer, they do not have the same great social importance. The shirt or hat presented by a man recently back from Southern Rhodesia may bring him favourable attention from the chief, but the present is made by an individual and arises from his own political aspirations. So far as I could tell, such presents are not effective as bribes. On the other hand, the presentation of beer is an affirmation of a relationship between a social group, often a village or division, and a political office, and most of those affected directly

[13] At the meeting two beasts were asked for, but a year later only one beast was mentioned.

[14] cf. Barnes, *Marriage*, for the political significance of affinal ties.

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
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not eat so much as other people. He must leave enough for others or he would be ashamed. He would take a few lumps of porridge from one wooden dish (*ingcosamba*) and then hand the other dishes to those around him. Each day one beast had to be killed from the house of each wife of the *inkosi* in turn. It was their food and they could not cease killing. The *inkosi* had his own great garden. After hoeing the *indawa* of the *indlunkulu* called all the village people to come and plant these gardens first before their own. They did this because if a man was hungry, he went to the *inkosi* and said 'I am hungry' and he was given food to eat.

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In this account it is clear that the daily life of the Paramount had both private and public aspects. In private he was vulnerable to attacks from enemies. Hence he depended on the services of a trusted attendant to see that no sorcerers could make bad magic from his excreta; and he ate no food except that prepared by his own wives and mothers. On the other hand, in public he appeared as the generous and ceremonious ruler, providing food, beer and snuff for his visitors, and himself practising that restraint in eating which was characteristic of Ngoni good manners both from host and guest.

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In addition to the daily routine of sharing food with his immediate entourage and chance visitors, the Paramount had special feasts known as *isiphoko*. These feasts, as described by Cibambo, were related to the bringing of tribute, thus emphasizing the reciprocal nature of the gifts passing between the people and the Paramount.

¶ Along with the tribute the *inkosi* had his feasts with which he wanted to feed his people. At an appointed time the *inkosi* and his wives and mothers prepared beer and three or four beasts for his men and women. Men ate their meat in the kraal but the women at the *indlunkulu*. All the people thanked him everywhere, including the women, and the men were thanking with dancing. Even although people were not called by the *inkosi*, yet many people came to his village to beg food from the *inkosi*. Also by telling the *izinduna* the *inkosi* would invite people to eat with him, and many would come from far away. The wives of the *inkosi* and his mothers were cooking soft or hard porridge, with different *imbido* (relishes) so that the *inkosi* could give them to his people. They would all be waiting in the kraal. A generous *inkosi* liked to stay in the kraal so that his food should be sent there in order to feed both notable people and poor people. He would be watching whom to give food to.

In this way although there was tribute (*imisindo*), it was not very burdensome. People did not complain to the *inkosi* about it. It was as if they were playing, because of the dancing. Those who had no wealth came to the *inkosi* and begged him to help them. The *inkosi* gave cattle to these people without asking them to pay again, because he said 'The people and the cattle, they are all mine. They are eating each other.'

There was an apparent contradiction here. On the one hand there was true reciprocity, that of the people who brought tribute or gifts and in

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
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643 651 431 527 571 turn were invited to eat with the Paramount or summoned to special feasts. On the other hand there were people who seemed to have nothing, and who came in the hope of getting invited to eat food if they just sat in the kraal and looked hungry. Cibambo called them 'the notable people' and 'the poor people'. This contrast in behaviour ran right through Ngoni society and reflected the social standing of individuals who behaved in such different ways. There was a good deal of cadging for gifts and of gate-crashing at feasts on the part of people who had no intention, or no possibility, of making any adequate return. An Ngoni proverb illustrated the public attitude to reciprocal giving as distinct from begging: 'To say: Give, give, is to snatch. The child of a free man only gives.'

571 643 651 431 The bringing of tribute to the Paramount was only one aspect of the reciprocal relationships which ran right through Ngoni society, namely the bringing of gifts by a man in an inferior social position to his superior, with the expectation of receiving food or favour and of standing well with this superior. It was recognized that tribute was of two kinds, one of which was voluntary. If a *nduna* or other notable wanted to please the Paramount he brought him presents—grain, flour, meat, beer. It was always emphasized that this was a free gift, with the added proviso that the giver wished to keep on good terms with the Paramount. Ngoni informants declared that the only compulsory form of tribute in pre-European days was that whenever a lion or a leopard was killed it had to be brought to the royal village through a succession of intermediaries, as described below.

These two principles of free giving and compulsory giving, and the attitudes engendered, are compared with the feeling about compulsory taxes under European rule in this text by Cibambo.

¶ Although people hate giving taxes to strangers in this land, yet tribute (*imisolo*) was given to their *inkosi* and to other chiefs. Such tribute was given in an indirect way, that is the *isinduna* did not mark out those who gave and who did not give tribute. The Ngoni did not wish that every male should give tribute as is done by Europeans today. They were just pleased if the village headman or *mukumazana* had given something even though other people in his village did not give anything. Even the *akamazana* themselves gave something at the time they thought it was convenient to themselves to give. There was no fixed time of the month or year. Much that was given as tribute was beer, meat, ivory, hoes and cloth, also cattle, sheep and goats after raids, and other loot from war.

[828] **Power to 'eat' (*ukudla*) lion- and leopard-skins was given to certain people of the Swazi clans, but all the rest were obliged to bring them in. The lion- or leopard-skin had to be given first to the village headman. He went with it to the *chief* or *mukumazana*. This one brought it to the *inkosi* along with his *amadoda* or *amajuba* of all his villages, the older men and younger men. This was like going as warriors and they went with dancing (*Ngoba*). The one who first stabbed the animal was pointed out, and the**

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second and third, and the finisher, at the place of dancing in the kraal. At such times each one when called rose and danced *nyagiya*, repeating his names. This was called *ukuhlika izinkalipi*, reporting the heroes or the fierce ones. This is still being done today. The *inkosi* thanked the people who brought the skins by giving them a beast or a goat. When they were dressing the meat and eating it, they kept on dancing *ligubo* and crying the war-cry. At such times the women went along with the men to help them dance *ligubo*. They made the responses to the songs and jerked their necks.

All such things the *inkosi* divided among his houses. The big house had a big share, but especially his mother's house. She should have most. Even if his real mother was dead, the big share had to go there, to her house, where her successor lived.

Visits to the Paramount, whether for a particular occasion or as a matter of routine, were hedged about with ceremonial. It was expected that *ukumzansa* and other important people who lived near enough would visit the Paramount frequently and, according to some informants, they went every day in pre-European times.

No one could approach the Paramount except through one of the *izinduna* of the royal village, and the correct person to approach was the *induna* of the *indlunkulu*. Visitors were expected to wait at the gate of the kraal and put down their spears. When they were brought by the *induna* to the Paramount, they greeted him with '*Bayete*'. Then they sat down and the Paramount told the *induna* to greet them, and they replied '*Yebo, inkosi*'. This custom of indirect approach to the Paramount has been maintained. Early travellers in Nyasaland spoke of observing it, and when I was there it was considered outrageous manners on the part of any European if he penetrated immediately to the presence of the Paramount, without going through the accustomed channels.

The Paramount was both greeted and thanked for gifts of food, beer or snuff, with '*Bayete*'. If he moved from the kraal, all present said '*Bayete*'. If anyone had to leave his presence, he crouched low and murmured '*Bayete*' as he went out. Cibambo described this punctilious formality of thanking for gifts in the Ngoni manner.

¶ When receiving presents the Ngoni thanked the giver by taking them with two hands, even though it was a small present. Afterwards they thanked the giver by his *inkongo*, clan name, openly. They said that receiving a thing with one hand showed that you derided it and did not put any value on it. When receiving a present from bigger people or from a chief, some words of respect were added to the *inkongo*, such as '*Baba*', '*Nkosi yami*', '*E-Jere*'. Often the receiver if he was much pleased with the present added some *izitukazo* to the clan name, if he knew them. Those near him or some further away helped the receiver by thanking loudly after him. If what he received was food, he thanked at the beginning, and after eating the food he thanked again. If such a present of food was given to a body of people, the leader in the company first led the others in

643 644 431 thanking, and then all thundered the thanking together. This included all the rest who were in the neighbourhood though they did not take part in the feast or the present. The leader would first thank '*E-Jere*' and then all would follow together, '*E-Jere*', or the clan name of the one who was the giver. The Paramount, if he gave presents to the people, was not thanked by his clan name as other people. He was thanked by '*Bayete*' as was done when saluting him. Likewise those who received the title *Nkamo* were thanked by that title when they gave presents to people.

643 644 533 576 On ceremonial occasions, visitors to the royal village heard the *izibongo* or praise-songs of the Paramount. These were songs referring to great deeds and notable incidents both in the lifetime of the reigning Paramount and in the lives of his predecessors. They were distinct from the *izinkulumo*, which were honorific epithets added to the clan name and spoken when thanking a well-known man or woman for their gifts. The *izinkulumo* could be said by anyone, since each person of note had his own which were well known. The *izibongo* could only be spoken or sung by an *umbongi* or official 'praiser'. Such a person was a man of good [826] memory and possessing eloquence. The chest was thought to be the seat of wisdom and eloquence, and a man who composed praise-songs, as distinct from repeating well-known ones, had to have the faculty of finding the right words, since new songs of this kind were generally invented on a sudden inspiration.

The occasions when the praise-songs were recited were when important visitors came to the royal village; when beasts were slaughtered in the ancestor cult; at special dances at the royal village or at the feasts of the Paramount. On such occasions the official praiser stood up in the kraal, everyone kept silence and did not move, and after a pause he began to call out '*Bayakonga inkosi*', 'let us praise the Paramount'. In repeating the praise-songs he began with those of the immediate ancestor of the Paramount, and then went on to those of earlier ancestors. At the end he shouted '*Bayete*' and all the people replied '*Bayete*'. Examples of the praise-songs of Zwangendaba and his father Hlacwayo of the northern kingdom and of Ngwana, father of Mpeta, of the central Ngoni kingdom are given at the end of the chapter.

643 644 522 The tension caused by the extreme formality in the behaviour of the Paramount, his courtiers and his visitors was lightened by the presence of a court jester. Informants were agreed that such an individual was usually present to amuse the Paramount with his sallies and gestures and clown-like tumbling about. Dr. Laws referred to such a jester at the court of Mbelwa I when the Livingstonia Mission was making its first settlement in northern Nyasaland.[1] I saw a jester who came with Paramount Zintambira Masoko from Portuguese territory when he and his officials visited Mzikhatha for the war-dance at the mourning for Bambo

[1] Livingstone, W. P. *Laws of Livingstonia*. London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1921, p. 000.

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
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(*ukuqwendisa*). The middle section, the main part of the ceremony, took place in the husband's village while the bridal party was there. In the last part the bride was left in her new home and three ceremonies marked her gradual integration into her new social group. 585

After the number of cattle had been decided upon in the final stage of the betrothal, the initiative was left to the girl's parents to announce the date of the *umtshado*. Eventually a message was sent through the *gqo* house of the girl's village to say that the bridal party would arrive on a certain day. Before the day came, the girl, now addressed as *umkhokazi* (the bride), was called to the *indlunkulu* in her village. There the leading women, her father's mothers, who had called in her father's sisters, gave her final instructions on how to behave in her new home. Ngoni women said that they were told at this time: 'Our child, we are putting you out of our family. We are handing you over to the other people. You were free and now your freedom is over for you are under other people. Where you are going you will meet with many troubles. They will say of you many things which you did not do. It is good to be patient.' During this instruction the girl cried and so did her mother. On the morning of the departure the girl was dressed in freshly prepared skins, her hair was arranged in the *isikhato* (chignon) to which the gall bladder of a goat was pinned, and the gall bladder of a cow was tied to her elbow. Then, still sobbing and whimpering, and surrounded by her age mates and the female members of her house, she set out for her bridegroom's village, the young men of her village driving a bullock (*umvundo*) as a present from the bride's parents to the mother of the bridegroom, in whose herd it was placed. [292 237] [152]

This part of the ceremony, the entry of the bride's party (*ukuqwendisa*), was held to be of great importance, since it was the first time the bride's family and friends as a group had met the husband's family. The bride's procession waited by the kraal gate, singing *umimbo* songs, and every now and then a woman of the bride's party, one of her father's sisters, sang the praises of the bride's clan. As the young men driving the bullock entered the kraal, the bridal party joined them and they began to dance in the kraal. 571 585

Now the first overtures were made between the bride's party and the people of the bridegroom's village. The older women of the village approached the older women of the bride's party, greeting them and exchanging, in the Ngoni phrase, 'words which were good and proud and showed the quickness of their tongues'.

After these advances, the men of the village came into the kraal or gathered by the *indlunkulu*. While the bridal party began to sing with their heads bowed, the chief woman from the *indlunkulu* of the bride's village came forward, bending low, and on her knees presented to the *induna* of the *indlunkulu* of the husband's village a basket containing snuff boxes and beads. She made a speech, in which she said, 'Here is [516 427]

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293 cattle of *his* mother's house and those of other widows of his father,
420 even though the widows remarried and went to live elsewhere. The ownership of a herd, in the sense of authority to acquire and to dispose of the cattle, was in fact vested in the senior male members belonging to each house in whose name cattle were held. This senior male leadership of a house had, in the central kingdom, a parallel in the senior male members of a *banja*. The implication in both was the same—that there was a group of senior men linked by membership of a house or a *banja*, who took responsibility for all the cattle in the herd of that house or *banja* and for all additions to the herd. Any new beasts acquired through natural increase, *lobola*, court payments, gifts, or purchase, by any member of that house went into the herd belonging to it. Thus it was easy for young men working in the south to send back money to their fathers or fathers' brothers to buy cattle. They knew the choice would be well made and that the cattle would be well cared for until their return.

The right of disposal of cattle in a herd belonging to a house or *banja* was based on the same concept of ownership. The senior male group had to decide which beasts to send for the *lobola* when a young man of [417] their house married. They undertook, as owners of the cattle, to pay fines in court cases when a member of the house was fined. If money was needed, either by the group as a whole or by an individual member, a beast was chosen and sold by the senior men; part of the proceeds was given to the individual who needed help, and part either buried under the floor of the hut of the woman who was head of the house, or converted into cloth and stored in the hut. Gifts of cattle were sometimes [431] given to important visitors, or as an expression of sympathy when mourning at a funeral, or for a sacrifice to the ancestors. On all such occasions the decision to dispose of one or more beasts and the selection of them were in the hands of the senior male group. Though prolonged discussion might go on before a decision to sell or make a gift was made, once there was agreement the selection was often made very quickly. The leading men would go to the kraal, point out the beasts to the herd-boys, and tell them to drive them to the appointed place.

233 The care of the herds was primarily the responsibility of the senior men, though the actual herding was delegated to the herd-boys. Informants said that in pre-European days great care was taken of the animals in the rainy season; the ant-hills in the kraal were preserved so that the animals might get out of the mud, and calf-houses with roofs were always provided for shelter for the calves. I saw some calf-houses of this kind, and some kraals with ant-hills left in them, but neither was common practice, and the reason given was that the kraals and herds were much smaller than in pre-European days.

There were two chief objectives in the care of herds: that the cattle should keep well and avoid disease, and that they should multiply. The

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considered it his individual bad luck. On the other hand the house which depended on its herd for mutual help among its members and for the performance of ritual in sickness was deeply concerned at the loss of cattle and at any diminution of its herd. 231 556

After security, pleasure and emotional satisfaction were important Ngoni values in relation to cattle. This outlet for interest and enjoyment was very marked among Ngoni men. It began with the young herd-boys and continued until old age. Cattle were an endless topic for discussion, and in remote areas, where few strangers came and local affairs played a predominant part in village life, the fortunes of individual beasts and the progress of herds were talked about continuously. The advent of a letter from a son in the south sending money to his father to buy a beast gave a fillip to village life which little else provided. When the young men themselves came home, they went during their first evening to the kraal where the cattle they had paid for were kept, and showed interest and pleasure in the herd which was shared by all. The older men who had carried the responsibility were there, and on the fringes of the group the herd-boys hung around, listening to their elders, proud of having done their bit for the cattle which were the common concern of all three age-groups.

The Ngoni were aware that security in their cattle and the pleasure they got from them had to be won, and there was a price to pay. Hence they attached great value to knowledge and experience and to the ability to organize. Among the senior men responsible for a herd in a house or *kanja*, some would be known for their knowledge and skill in handling cattle and for their experience in dealing with sick beasts, in castrating bullocks, and in choosing well when buying new beasts. The Ngoni recognized an innate quality of skill, which they called *mphumi mabwino*, 'the good forehead', a term used as an equivalent for the 'green thumb' when talking about crops. They also recognized the knowledge which came from experience and which might or might not be associated with *mphumi mabwino*. In any village where there were cattle, men were pointed out who possessed knowledge about cattle-tending, and the choice of a neighbouring village kraal for boarding out purposes was generally decided on the reputation of the owner of the kraal as a good cattle man. Not all the people who had this specialized knowledge had ability to organize the care of cattle, a characteristic Ngoni quality on which they set a high value. Foresight and planning were necessary in the choice of kraals for boarding out, in the selection of animals for *lobolo*, fines, gifts or slaughter, and above all in buying and selling cattle. This kind of organizing ability required the possession of information about local markets and about potential sellers or buyers of cattle. It also demanded some nice calculations when sending cattle for *lobolo* or giving a beast as a gift. Men were often torn between wishing to appear generous to the point of lavishness, and not wanting to give 231 555 [431]

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away the prize animals in the herd. Their formula in presenting a beast was 'Here is a small sheep.' This belittling of a gift was the social counterpart of their inner desire for a reputation for generosity.

It has been clear from many previous references that mutual assistance among members of a house was inherent in the social pattern of cattle-ownership. The Ngoni attached great value to this reciprocity of service, and it was deeply embedded in their social ethic. Young men in Ngoni villages thought twice before they deliberately took action which would bring them into the courts, because the fine would have to be paid by their elders from the common herd of cattle. The implications of this service proved no ultimate deterrent to hot-headed youth, but the lesson was constantly being rubbed in. After a court case for adultery, when a young man's father and his father's brothers had handed over a beast for a fine, they would grumble in the evening by the kraal at this waste of good cattle, and suggest it was time the young man went off to the south and sent money home to buy more cattle. This was the cycle of mutual help—the elders provided cattle from the herd for *lobola* and fines for the young men, who in turn went off to work and sent back money to buy more cattle. Reference has been made to 'the cloth of the spirits', when cattle were sold to provide cash for a young man who needed it, and the balance was used to buy cloth which was kept in the hut where the ancestral spirit was guarded. This cloth was the common property of all who belonged to the house owning the herd, and was returnable to the hut after it had been worn for some festive occasion. The forms which this mutual help could take were numerous and varied, and they all illustrated the fact that the correct and continuous observance of this reciprocity was considered by the Ngoni as one of the basic values underlying the ownership and use of cattle.

Among the group bound together by cattle-ownership this emphasis on mutual help as a desirable behaviour pattern had its counterpart in the social concept of integration. As we have seen, the Ngoni put a high value on 'staying together', on being united when challenged by a situation which made for disintegration. Within the social units of the house and family, the ownership of cattle and their care and use demanded some degree of co-operation through responsibility for the herd which was held in common. Integration between the living and their ancestors was also provided by the cattle. Common possession of a herd did more than just hold people together. The pattern of family and house organization which was characteristically Ngoni was given some stability through the ownership of cattle, allowing for the subdivision of herds when the new village 'went out', the exchanges at marriage, and the sacrifices at death.

on was placed on it. The meat in the basket and on the gate stayed there all night.

Following the ritual of offering meat to the spirits came the ritual of cooking and eating the meat, both that offered to the spirits and the rest. After the basket of meat had been left all night in the place of the spirits, the large quantity on the gate was carried away and cooked by an old woman outside the hut of Bambo Mangu's granddaughter. The meat in the basket which had been offered to the spirits was put in a pot and cooked on the fire in Bambo Mangu's hut. It stayed cooking all day and all night till the following morning. Dzinthenga Phungwako, an old and highly respected *ikhoda*, came to the hut and divided the sacrificial meat among all who were in the house, that is Bambo Mangu, her daughter and granddaughter and several senior women. When they had finished the leading women stood up and thanked '*Zikhomo Mazeko*', '*Zikhomo Magwagwa*'. Then they washed their hands and went to their own houses.

The large quantity of meat which had been laid on the gate and cooked on another fire in another *bwalo* was carried in a big pot and put down outside Bambo Mangu's hut in the late afternoon. Her daughter came outside and divided the meat into three piles: a small one from the breast-bones for the women, a leg for the chief, the head for Kabwani the headman of a neighbouring village, and the rest in a big pot for the men. A boy came to tell Lopati that all was ready and he and the chief went out to the place where the beast was killed, near the gate of the kraal. There were four groups already sitting there and the chief and Lopati made a fifth: the *mudoda*, the senior men; the *majoba*, the young men; the *mabwa*, the herd-boys; and the little boys. Before Lopati divided the meat he and the chief washed elaborately with water brought in a gourd, and then he washed the knife before cutting the meat. He called the *mudoda* to send someone for their portion in a basket, then the young men and the herd-boys were given their portions—a basket for each group, and the small boys had bits put in their hands. The eating was very sedate, there was no snatching of choice bits, and in each group the one who fetched the meat distributed it. There was the general atmosphere of a ritual meal rather than a feast, though the small boys smacked their lips appreciatively. From time to time Lopati called up someone from a group and gave him a bit more to divide up. When it was all eaten, a boy was sent to fetch water and the soapy leaves which the Ngoni used for washing, and the chief and Lopati and the *mudoda* all washed the grease off their fingers. Then Lopati stood up and called out '*Siyabonga baba, nikomo wetuyena mudoda*', 'We are praising you, father, thank you child of the Paramount', and the others all agreed and said '*Zikhomo baba.*' Then they all went together to Bambo Mangu's hut and stood opposite her door and called out the same thanks. The women who had eaten their meat

in these age groups on the verandah also came forward and, led by NaNkokoma, a widow of Njokomule I, thanked in the women's language, *'Zimete, zaikwa watwana wenkosi.'*

I did not witness any ritual sacrifices in the northern kingdom but the accounts given me by informants corresponded closely with the ritual in Mzukhatha just described. When sacrificing for rain to the spirits of the Paramount, a black ox with no white spot was driven into the kraal in the late afternoon and the chosen spokesman addressed the ancestral spirits of the Jere clan telling them that this was their beast, they must eat the meat and tell UMkulumqango that the people needed rain. While this man prayed to the spirits he stood facing the beast, and everyone else sat looking in front of them and keeping very quiet. The women stayed at home in their huts and the Paramount stayed in his hut 'as if mourning'. When the beast urinated and showed that the spirits had heard, a messenger came and informed the Paramount. The beast was killed early the next morning in the kraal. While the flaying took place, all the huts of the chief wives were smeared with dried cow-dung on the floors and on the smooth place outside the doors. The meat, in two parts, was taken into the *indlunkulu* and left there all night at the back, so that the spirits might lick it. The next morning the meat was cooked in the kraal by the *madodo* and when it was ready they reported to the big *induna*. He called all the people into the kraal and divided them into companies according to their sections and head villages. The meat was given to the head of each head village who divided it among his group. When everyone had finished, one of the leading men stood up and began to praise the spirit using his titles and praise-names (*izitukuso*). The rest stood up and shouted *Bayete*. They then began to dance a war-dance but, the informants added, that was soon stopped by torrents of rain.

These chapters on the Ngoni ancestor cult bring to an end this study of the two Ngoni kingdoms in Nyasaland in the 1930's. We have seen how their distinctiveness as a people depended on the culture which they brought with them from the south and how this culture was found among the families of the Swazi and trans-Zambesi clans. In the topics included in the three sections of this book: the political system, the social organization, and the ancestor cult, the main features of Ngoni culture are most clearly seen. In much of their economic and agricultural life there was little to distinguish them from their neighbours among the other Nyasaland peoples. The changes brought about by the missions, the schools, new forms of local government, and new types of occupation, were all tending to make the Ngoni less distinctive as a people. The conversion of some leading Ngoni to Christianity, as suggested in Chapter V of Part II, and the spread of schools were together the most powerful influences in altering Ngoni traditional culture. The

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small bitter thorn apple and mixing in castor oil. This was applied with a feather to the baby's navel.

When the cord dropped the baby's head was shaved, and the mother shaved a little hair round her temples. Then they washed carefully, using sweet-smelling soapy leaves, oiled the baby's skin, put on clean clothes, and came out of the hut door and sat on a clean mat outside. This first public coming out of the hut took place in the late afternoon, so that the men, after their work was finished, could come to 'salute the new stranger'. The husband and his brothers were the first to come, and this was the first time he had seen the baby. They brought small presents such as a fowl or a basket of flour, and always strings of beads which were tied round the baby's wrists and ankles, neck and waist. The word used for these little gifts was 'to give a present just for pleasing', and Ngoni Christians when speaking of such presents to new babies likened them to the gifts brought by the Magi to the infant Christ.

While the husband and his immediate kinsmen came to greet the baby at the hut door, the senior men of the village stayed by the gate of the kraal. After the cattle had come back that evening and the kraal gates were shut, the grandmother carried the baby to the gate and presented him to the senior men who responded by giving small presents to the child. This was always done if the baby was a boy, but sometimes omitted for girls.

When small children seeing the new baby on its mother's lap asked where it came from, they were always told that the mother had found it by the river in the rushes on the bank. The object of this reply, so Ngoni women said, was to hide the secret of birth from the children and stop them asking further questions. The Ngoni culture pattern of childhood innocence required that children should be kept in ignorance of birth and sexual intercourse while they were young. By adults therefore they were put off with stories of finding the baby on the river bank. As usual, however, in

954 house was still killed and eaten. The cloth came out of the
[432] store of cloth bought when cattle were sold, and kept in the
hut of the senior woman of the father's house.

Visit to the mother's home

593 If, as was always the case in earlier days, the mother of the
579 new baby had come from a distant village, she did not see
her own mother or her relatives, and they did not see the
child until it was several weeks old, and considered by the
senior women strong enough to undertake a journey. Then
a visit involving much ceremony took place, for the wife's
[604] mother-in-law headed the party. The stiff and formal rela-
tions between the two sets of 'in-laws' had been eased
slightly through the series of feasts and exchanges which
preceded and followed the marriage ceremony. Face-to-face
[571] intercourse was, however, still very formal between the two
families, and this first visit with the grandchild was in one
sense an act of condescension on the part of the husband's
family, since the child belonged to them. It was also a human
and natural recognition of the eagerness of the young mother
to see her own mother and display her child. Word was sent
in advance by a messenger from the husband's village to
announce the visit, so that the wife's family could make due
preparation.

The main object of this visit was, in the Ngoni phrase, 'to
show the child at its mother's home'. The young mother and
[604] baby, with her mother-in-law in the place of honour, sat
outside the big house of the girl's father's family. Her father
and his male relatives came to salute the child and to give it
[603] presents of beads, and in modern times small gifts of money
[603] as well. If the girl's father owned many cattle, he killed a
beast, and they feasted that night, and the visitors carried
home meat with them as well as the presents to the child. It
was all very formal and correct, except when the young
mother escaped for a short time to the circle of her sisters and
girlhood friends, and exchanged confidences with them.

[The Ngoni engage in gift giving and gift exchanges on frequent occasions, and the relevant information is scattered throughout the text. Since only a few major instances have been marked for this category, the interested reader should consult category 116.]

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which the marriage lacked subetance. We may look on these rites as fulfilling two social functions. Firstly they affirmed the position of the bride as wife of her husband, and secondly they emphasized the role of her parents as parents-in-law. In all the ceremonies of marriage the man and his wife were supported by members of their own groups, but we do not know exactly who these supporters were. They may have been agnatic kin, maternal kin, neighbours, or political superiors. From what we know of modern marriage it is likely that the composition of these groups of supporters was never rigidly determined.

The beginning of the marriage was announced at a ceremony which we may refer to as the gall bladder rite. It was held in the man's village and, after a beast had been killed, the bride was anointed with its gall and intestinal fat.[14] Another rite, which took place up to a year later, was held when the bride cooked food for her husband for the first time.[15] Before this ceremony she relied for her food on the man's other wives or his mother or grandmother. If the marriage was a successful one, that is, if the woman had borne live children and the husband was treating her well, the woman's parents showed their appreciation of their son-in-law by sending him, from time to time, presents of beer.[16] The son-in-law, or his father, rewarded the women who brought the beer with a present of meat. Later, the wife's parents brewed beer for the son-in-law and called him to their village so that he might formally enter his wife's mother's hut.[17] Later still, a ceremony was held at which the man and his wife's mother ate together.[18] At these rites of entering into the mother-in-law's hut or eating with her, a beast was sometimes killed by the father-in-law for the benefit of the man.

4. *Relationship to affines*

Apart from the specific ceremonial obligations there were continuing obligations of hospitality and assistance between the two groups. There was always visiting between them, and indeed

[14] This ceremony is called *bucisa*, a word said to be of Zulu origin whose meaning I have been unable to trace. Informants were unable to say what it meant. The gall bladder is called *nyongo*, from the Zulu *inyongo*. Rattray, op. cit. pp. 49 and 114, and Scott, *A cyclopaedic dictionary of the Mang'anja language spoken in British Central Africa*, p. 486, both translate the Nyanja word *nyongo* as spleen, but from Rattray's description of a marriage ceremony it seems that a gall bladder must have also been in use among the Ngoni of Southern Nyasaland.

[15] *Mpikubika*. Cf. the Zulu *uku-phekisa*, to help or make to cook. Weise, op. cit. 'Expedition . . .', pp. 473-4, and 'Geschichte . . .', p. 192 describes what seems to be a similar ceremony, which he says took place a few days after marriage.

[16] All offerings of beer which are carried from one place to another, to a son-in-law or to a headman or chief, are called *utipoko*. Cf. Zulu *uku-phaka*, to cook.

[17] Called *nungwisa*. Cf. Zulu *uku-ngenisa*, to enter another person's hut.

[18] Called either *nanyalasa*, from the Zulu *uku-dlana*, or *kulyalasa*, from the Bemba *ku-lyalana*, both verbs meaning 'to eat together'.

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842 wherever they decide to settle. Children are still valuable. A barren woman is pitied, and a man's impotence is whispered about behind his back. Men and women seek fertility, and a man tries to conceal his impotence. A woman who does not want to bear children is regarded as irresponsible.

We have seen that the traditional solution for barrenness was to introduce a linked co-wife, but this is now rarely done. A woman can either look for medicines[14] to make her fertile, or, if she is unsuccessful, she may beg children from a fertile sister. These children will stay with her while they are young, but they are not thought of or talked about as being her own children.

No clear distinction is drawn between impotence and sterility, and men who are said to be impotent are also known to commit adultery. A sterile husband does not find favour with his wife or with her relatives, who want her to have children to care for her when she grows old. If medicines fail to cure a man's sterility, and it is thought that the lack of children is due to him and not to his wife, then he may call in an acquaintance to sleep with his wife so that [839] she may conceive. For this task, it is said that a man will choose a person whose discretion he can trust, but one on the fringe of his acquaintance who will not feel disposed to gossip maliciously about the incident afterwards. Thus it is said that a man would never ask his brother to do this. If the woman bears a child then at some later date the husband gives a goat to the progenitor, hoping that [431] people will not connect the present with the birth of the child.

Sterility is a shameful thing and men do not easily admit to it. [128] My information on the procedure followed in specific instances is based only on village gossip and not on admissions by the men and women concerned. Although it is agreed that a sterile man may feel 892 forced to call in a seed-raiser the whole matter must remain secret. 839 There must be no loophole by which adultery might be condoned. In the words of an informant,

> A man may be impotent and may ask someone to copulate with his wife so that she may have children. This man coming to copulate with his wife comes in secret as it is considered a disgraceful thing among the people of the family and the rest of the village if they know, yet the people in the village know very well sometimes. In the old days the same thing happened, but if a man coming to sleep with the woman came in an open way, and everyone knew of his sleeping with the wife of an impotent man, he was to be killed by the chief, even though the impotent man asked him to do this work for him. The person coming to do this work of copulating with this woman was to be paid a cow or a goat for the work that he did. In these days it happens.

The sterile husband takes the risk that his friend will continue sleeping with the woman after she has conceived. I have recorded

[14] Called *ziwele*. The first child born after the successful administration of this medicine is sometimes called *Ziwele*.

after a year or so. If he keeps it going himself he visits his own village for a week or two at a time to tend the garden, and stores the produce with a relative in the village. If, however, a man intends to reside for many years in his wife's village, he gives away his garden and concentrates his labours in his wife's garden. After a year or two he builds her a storehouse in her village and the couple begin to keep their own supplies separate from those of her relatives.

Even when the couple have their own storehouse it is considered proper if from time to time they are given maize by their parents. If a woman living virilocally goes to visit her parents and relatives and returns without maize or flour her husband's relatives are likely to laugh at her and say 'She must come from a very poor family'.

Uxorilocal residence is described by the vernacular term *cikamwene*. In its most general usage this word refers to the obligations a man owes to his wife's parents, particularly at the beginning of his marriage. It has three specific meanings:

(i) Uxorilocal residence.

(ii) Assistance rendered from time to time by a man in his wife's mother's garden.

(iii) A hoeing party of men and women from the man's village which works in his wife's mother's garden.

Uxorilocal residence is classed with these other two aspects of affinal obligation and like them it can be avoided completely, shirked, or executed in full. The extent to which the obligations are fulfilled

Table XIV. Virilocality and Uxorilocality, 1945-9

Wife's residence	Husband's residence		Total
	Rural	Away	
Virilocal ..	72	14	86
Uxorilocal ..	24	20	44
Total	96	34	130
Ratio of virilocal to uxorilocal wives	3	0·7	1·95
Association between husband's residence and wife's residence $\chi^2 = 12{\cdot}83$ $P < {\cdot}001$			
Informants as in Table XIII			

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
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becomes her husband's *sibling* so that their marriage is then incestuous. I have recorded elsewhere[1] an instance in which a man married his son's wife's mother. His son's wife left her husband, saying that she could not sleep with her *sibling*. In court the old man was ordered to give up his new wife and on that understanding his son's wife returned to her husband. Yet when I left the area two years later the man and his son were both living with their wives, despite the order of the court.

It is quarrelling, adultery and divorce that bring together the two groups of kin to deliberate. Quarrelling is usually between man and wife and arises from their personal life together. There are very few quarrels between the two groups of kin over the custody of the children or about the handing over or return of marriage payments. The custody of children is determined in theory by the payment of bridewealth. In practice a child stays with its mother until it is weaned and may then be sent to a grandparent. Here there is no argument, even in theory, that all the children should go to one grandparent or the other depending on bridewealth. Some people say that the proper thing to do is to send the first child to the man's mother, the second to his wife's mother, the third to the man's mother, the fourth to his wife's mother, and so on. This is not carried out in practice, and a child goes to live with whichever grandparent asks for it or is conveniently situated. Some old widows run households containing up to half a dozen grandchildren, real and classificatory, and others live alone or with one grandchild although there are many grandchildren available. A married man is concerned that he should not appear to favour his own relatives at the expense of his affines, and he endeavours to see that his children go to live where they will be welcomed and well looked after. As with children, so it is with presents. If he returns from work and gives his father a shirt, it will be prudent the next time to give a shirt to his wife's father. It is only when the marriage has broken up that the two sets of relatives may see themselves opposed against each other, each insistent on its own rights. Even then, there is little point in quarrelling about children. A child soon becomes 'wise enough' and can choose for itself. I recorded an exceptional instance in which a man aged about twenty moved from the village of his father's father, where he had been living, to his mother's father's village on the instructions of his kinsmen, who said that as his father had not paid bridewealth for his mother, he must follow his mother's kin and not his father's. This kind of move does not often occur, and although only one marriage in twenty is accompanied by the payment of bridewealth, many people settle in their fathers' villages.

8. Other Kinsfolk

We have so far discussed the role of kin in a marriage in terms of

[1] See Barnes, *op. cit.* p. 192

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606 583 offers had been made to the leader of the party through the mother-in-law acting as intermediary for her husband. In the morning the mother-in-law came to the garden to find the hoers still there. She fell to the ground beseeching them to stop. The leader then told the party to stop, which they did with much grumbling. One hoer said 'It would have been better if we had cut down some more maize to cool down our hearts.'

Appendix IV

CARRYING BEER

606 431 273 The carrying of beer is the first formal occasion on which the initiative is taken by the woman's kin and not by the man's. Beer is brewed by the woman's mother and is taken to the husband's father, or if he is not available, to the husband himself. It is known as *vipeke*, a word used to describe any offering of beer sent to a chief or headman in virtue of his position as such as well as beer sent to a a son-in-law. Beer can and is sent in this way more than once, to indicate the continued respect enjoyed by the man in the eyes of his parents-in-law. Members of the Dutch Reformed Church who are not allowed to drink proper beer send instead gifts of porridge to their sons-in-law. The beer, or its porridge equivalent, is sent at least once in about 40 per cent of all marriages. It is usually brewed while the couple are living virilocally.

It is held by some that a man cannot expect beer sent to him until he has made the legalization payment for his wife. In practice, if the woman's parents think that he is treating his wife well, they may brew beer for him despite the absence of legalization payment.

The beer is brewed by the woman's mother, and is carried in jars from one village to another. If the villages are too far apart to make this practicable, the woman's mother comes to stay with some relative in a nearby village and does her brewing there. She herself does not accompany the party carrying the beer.

The party may consist of, say, half-a-dozen women from the village. They carry the beer to the man's village, and halt just outside the village. Sometimes they demand a present before they will agree to enter the village. They are led to the hut of the man's parents or of his grandmother, and there they offer the beer to the man's relatives. They are given somewhere to sleep the night. In the morning people come to greet them, and as in the gall bladder ceremony they reply with a little song. The pots of beer are allocated by the man's father to important people in the village. People who come to drink the beer give presents such as threepenny bits which are collected by the leader of the party and which are

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distributed among the women of the party as a recompense for carrying the beer. The married couple drink the beer but do not take any prominent part in the proceedings. The next day the man's father gives a beast or a goat or money to the leader of the party. The animal is killed and the women carry the meat back to their own village where it is divided up by some important relative of the wife. If some of the sprouted maise and flour that were prepared for the brewing remain over, the mother-in-law may brew again, and send it to her son-in-law as before. The second brew of beer is called 'offering'.[1]

Appendix V

ENTERING THE WIFE'S MOTHER'S HUT

As performed nowadays elements are combined from what formerly were two distinct ceremonies. The name of one of these, 'eating together' (*mayalano*) is now not often heard and the combined ceremony is known by the name of the other, 'entering' (*magenino*). It represents the final stage in the acceptance of the man as a satisfactory son-in-law and marks the formal setting aside of the avoidance relationship between him and his wife's mother. It is performed in about one marriage in eight. I attended two of these ceremonies.

Some informants say that like the carrying of beer the ceremony of entering is not performed unless the legalization payment is made. However, I have recorded instances in which the ceremony was performed in the absence of any payment. It almost always occurs after beer has been carried to the man's village once or twice and when the man is living virilocally.

The parents of the woman send word to the village of the man that on such and such a day there will be beer brewed for him to enter the hut of his mother-in-law. On the day appointed the man and his wife go in procession with other people, singing and dancing, from their village to the village of the woman's parents. The procession traditionally should be led by the eldest child of the marriage, boy or girl, holding a club aloft, but this is not always done. The man's parents do not go with the party but stay behind in the village. On the outskirts of the woman's parents' village, the party may be met by people dancing out to meet them, and they sometimes pause to drink beer brought out to them. The dancing party go on into the cattle byre, or if there is no byre to some clear space on the fringe of the village. They enter the byre in a rough

[1] *N'unde*, an Hlonga word.

6:Rattray/E,G-5 (ca. 1900) 1907 FRS Ngoni FRS

964 and take a large flat stone and set the corpse on it, and take a millstone and place it on his head. If it be he has children, they are made to take charcoal in their hands, and this they cast into the grave (this is to cause them to forget). Then some old man takes up a hoe, and strikes the ground at one side of the grave and again at the other, when many begin to fill in the earth, the chief mourners trampling it down.

III. When they have finished filling in, they knock out the hoe heads, and set off for the stream. They who carry the hoes and household belongings of the deceased go first. When they reach the water, the chief mourners bathe first, then every one else; the men bathe up-stream, the women down-stream. They do not rub each other's backs. When
968 they have finished bathing, they take the calico, sporran, and "nzengwa" baskets the dead man used to eat out of, and set fire to them, and splash the ashes with water. Then they set out for the village, wailing. When they come to the grave, the
[970] medicine man looks for medicine to remove the evil influence of the spirit of the dead; [this medicine] he breaks up, puts in a potsherd, pours on water, and stirs. The chief mourner begins to rub it on his
965 legs, face, and hands, then others come and do the same. If the deceased had children of his own, they also rub some of the medicine on. They again keep wake at the hut in which the man died. Next
• [971] morning at dawn the nearest relation of the dead takes goats and fowls and gives them to the chief mourners, who then begin to shave a little patch of hair from the side of each person's head, when the people will then shave each other quite bald. The widows go to some spot in the bush to weave the "red" bands and to shave. When every one has quite finished shaving, the meat is taken from the

6:Ratray E, G-5 (ca. 1900) 1907 FRS Ngoni FRS

again returning to the old village. That evening they take some of the fire (that they made earlier in the day) to kindle a fire with in the (new) hut (*Kuka*). In kindling it they do not squat down, they blow the faggots into flame from a standing position, and they do this lest the smoke might ever after hang in wreaths over the floor. The womenfolk come every day to cook.

II. When the chief's huts are finished, they build those of the old men, and when these are complete, they bring all the huts [from the old village]. When they see that all the huts are finished, beer is made at the old village, and they go and bring the spirits. He who has a grave pours some beer in a gourd-pot and places it on the grave, saying, "We have gone hence, you must not search for us here, come let us go together." On that day they demolish all the huts that remain, they leave only the huts of which the occupant has lately died. When now the sun begins to slant westward, from the *Kuka* hut they take five gourd-pots, and fill them with beer and make young women carrying these lead the way. The head old woman of the *Kuka* hut goes first, the chief wife of the chief follows *Gogo*, and then come the ones carrying the beer. When they arrive at the new village they set down the gourd-pots and all the people assemble. The elder of the village then begins to propitiate, saying, "There is the beer we down on earth have made, we have gone from yonder, we present to you your new village, all men you will have a care for." Then the village chief makes a present of a goat and hands it to the old man, and he again speaks, saying, "Here is a goat which your child presents, you will wash it down with the beer." If the goat makes water, that is to say the spirit consents, if it will not they do not kill it. Then they kill the goat

6:Rattray E,G-5 (ca. 1900) 1907 FR5 Ngoni FR5

village that "The people who have come to the village court are saying they wish so and so." Then the elders say, "Put them in a hut." Next morning they cook for them whole maize, the betrothed does not eat with them, and when the old women see she is dying of hunger, they take her to a hut on the outskirts of the village and give her beer.

II. On the following morning they from the man's village take an offering of two goats, and go with them to the girl's village. These goats are accepted, for they say, "They are only the spirits, and no doubt the price of the girl must be behind." When the young braves leave, they leave behind a child to guard the betrothed, and follow her about, and when they return to their own village they take other goats and go with them (to the girl's home), and when they come with them there they sit at the *bwalo* court, then one of the village elders makes a little gap in the grass fence (that surrounds all Angoni huts) and peeps out. When he sees the goats he tells the village chief that there are such and such a number, and the chief tells him not to receive them. Then the young warriors, when they have waited and waited, go off to their own village. At the outskirts they stand to await the escort of young girls, and then they go and say to the man who wishes to marry the girl, "They did not receive from us." So next morning they take more goats and go with them. The old man again looks out, and when he sees that more goats have come he goes and tells the girl's father, "To-day such and such a number have arrived." And the man answers, "Go and take them and put them in the kraal." (When this is done) the old man comes and takes the knobkerry from one of the men (who brought the goats) and puts it in a hut, and the men follow the knobkerry, and they cook

6:Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1900) 1907 FR5 Ngoni FR5

584 porridge for them and it is refused, and they spear
● 431 goats for them and they eat. Next day they go home. They of the girl's village tell them, saying, "You will hear from us." Now, if the malt for the beer be in readiness, they do not sleep many
[213] days, but if not, they let a moon pass. On the day on which the beer is strained they go and call the bodyguard of young warriors, and they come along with the husband (to be) to drink the beer. The man who is to marry the girl they go and hide away in a hut on the edge of the village along with his betrothed, and the beer for them will be drawn in a little pot.

585 III. Now every one comes together at the village court and bring goats. The betrothed sits on a
[302] mat. Her grandmother shaves her head, leaving a round patch of hair on the crown. When she has finished shaving her one of the men from the man's
[231] village steps out and begins to kill some goats. Should a goat not die immediately it is beaten. Then the goats are skinned, and they take a spleen and let drops fall from it on the head of the girl, and then inflate all the spleens. They take the fat from the belly, and spread it in the sun to dry. Towards evening they take the girl and go with her to the *Kuka* hut, and there they take a frothy medicine, called *chitundu*, and the girl bathes with it, and her little watchman bathes also, and he (the child) takes the spleens and the fat, the inflated spleens are fastened on the girl's head and the fat over her shoulders and under her arms. The little child, when he has finished tying them on, is beaten by the men from the man's village (playfully). Then one of the village elders gets up and speaks, saying, "There you have your mother, we give her you to-day; she is subject to no disease, her illnesses consist of occasional headaches. Should she

10. *Prohibited and Enjoined Unions (Ngoni).*

The Angoni are patrilineal, and in the case of a mixed Ngoni-Chewa marriage the child always takes the clan (*vide infra*, Section IV) of the father, whether bride-price has been paid or not. The children of brother and sister may marry each other, but not the children of two brothers or half-brothers, nor the children of two sisters or half-sisters. As with the Achewa, so also with the Angoni it is no longer considered incestuous to marry someone of the same clan.

11. *Forms of Marriage (Ngoni).*

When an Angoni wishes to marry, he sends a male friend without a gift to inform the girl's father of his desire. The father calls his wife, male relations and headmen to discuss the matter; and, if they agree to the proposal, the friend returns with the news to the prospective bridegroom who, several days later, despatches his *ambassa* with a present to the *ambassa* of the girl. There are always two *ambassa* on each side, neither more nor less. A father is ineligible; and brothers, sister's sons and fellow-villagers are generally chosen, as they are more likely to be at hand if required at any time. The present is only symbolic, and generally takes the form of a goat, though in the case of a wealthy bridegroom it may be a cow or some thing equally substantial. This part of the procedure is known as *kwenga*, and as soon as the present has been received by the bride's father, the marriage is valid in law.

A few days later, the groom sends a friend to conduct the girl to his house. She comes with several elder women and other girl friends, but her mother may not join the party. The bridegroom provides for them a feast of beer and meat in commemoration with his wealth. He presents beads to his wife, this ceremony being known as *kwa-tawa*, and sends a cloth (known as *nebeke*) to her mother, after which the women return home on the same day without consummation having been effected.

About a week later, accompanied by a small boy, the man proceeds by night to his father-in-law's house, and is given an empty house, where he sleeps with his wife. He must avoid being seen by any of the villagers, and therefore departs before daylight, going to a neighbouring village for food and rest, and returning on the following night, when the same precautions must be observed.

On the second morning he goes back to his village, and after two or three weeks sends a friend to fetch his wife. This time she comes openly, and sleeps with him for two or three nights in any available hut, after which she returns to her father.

The husband then begins to build her house at his village, and to pay the bride-price. This process is known as *kukwasha*, or *kupa nebeke*. The *nebeke*, or bride-price, may consist of cows, or cash, or other goods; and it varies in value according to the standing of the parties. If the bride is fully grown, payment should be completed within four or five months. Nowadays, however, Ngoni girls are generally married shortly before they reach the age of puberty, and in such cases a year or two may be allowed; but when the husband is unnecessarily dilatory, his father-in-law may oblige him to build a house near his own and to live there until he has fulfilled his contract; and until the bride-price has been paid in full, he cannot expect his wife to reside with him permanently at his own village.

within about four months of purchase, the money is refunded, unless it is shown that the owner is to blame. In the case of a sheep or goat, this period is reduced to about six weeks. 253 [672]

It is not the custom to hire out cattle, either for ploughing, or for milk. If a cow brings forth twin calves together, she and her offspring are presented to the herdsman, as the cow is supposed to be an exceptionally good cow; and the herdsman in return hands over three other animals of similar ages. [427] [431]

V.—Social Organization; Military.

1. *Preparations for War.*

The Ngoni expeditions against the Ankoswe consisted principally of raids at times when the crops were ripening and they were short of food. At such times the young warriors who thirsted for war signified their desire by dancing outside the house of the chief. After they had danced for three evenings, the chief fixed a day, food was prepared, and warriors were summoned from the neighbouring villages. The *sing'anga* made medicine to protect them against the weapons of their enemies, and as the army filed past him, he dipped a hammer into the medicine; and struck each man on the chest with it. The best-known *sing'anga* under Chief Chiwere was Chimenga, and his name is still held in veneration. 721 726 756

2. *Methods.*

The Angoni usually came upon their foe unawares, and attacked with a rush. If they met with a short resistance from a stockaded village, they surrounded it and camped till lack of water forced the besieged to sally forth. Quarter was rarely given to the men. 726

3. *Subsequent Proceedings.*

On their return, all who had killed a man repaired immediately to the *sing'anga* who mixed medicine with goats' milk. The warriors dipped their fingers in the mixture and put them into their mouths. Then they dipped again into the mixture, and rubbed it on their arms and legs, after which they stood up and shouted "O-o-o!" This form of purification was undergone in order to drive away the *chisunde* or affliction which they would otherwise suffer from the spirits of their dead enemies, and until they were cleansed they might not have any connection with women. Next day, they burned goats' horns, pounded them and mixed them in water, smearing the mixture first on cheeks and throat and then over the remainder of their persons. After this they proceeded to their homes and, having decorated themselves, displayed their reasonable pride by jumping about before the chief, who sent for a bull to be cooked and eaten. Prisoners were paraded, and when a man had taken three or more, one of them was always returned to him by the chief. 727 [783] [755]

9: Read E-S (1935) 1936 FRS Ngoni FRS

made friends with old Mpezeni and finally made Lusangezi, Mpezeni's head village, his head-quarters. He obtained mining rights in the land from Mpezeni, by word of mouth, but Mpezeni signed no deed of gift or transfer. This legal point which subsequently became one of the major points at issue in the North Charterland Company case has been emphasized again and again to me in the villages. 'Mpezeni was writing nothing. He was only giving presents to Weise, and Weise gave presents to him, and Mpezeni was saying, "You may travel in my country and dig for gold. You are my friend."' They add further, 'Mpezeni did not want to make friends with the British because he had heard from the Matabele and from Nyasaland what they were doing. Weise said "I am not from the British", and so Mpezeni was making promises with him.' So deeply is this tradition of friendship between Mpezeni and Weise, with its consequences of betrayal and disaster, embedded in the Ngoni thinking, that when I stayed in the Paramount Chief's village and exchanged presents with him, many old people shook their heads and warned the young people, 'The *Anuzu* war will come again. This is how that other war was beginning.'

Weise failed to establish his claim to mining rights in Mpezeni's territory with Sir Harry Johnston, then Commissioner for all British territories north of the Zambezi. Meantime the British South Africa Company obtained a new charter to extend its field north of the Zambezi, and sent an emissary to Mpezeni's kraal to make a treaty with him. Mpezeni refused. He also refused Sir Harry Johnston's emissary who met Weise at Mpezeni's kraal with a view to getting Mpezeni to make a treaty direct with the British Crown. The mining rights in Mpezeni's country were potentially valuable, and on Mpezeni's refusal to grant them were claimed by the British South Africa Company[1] on the ground of treaties made with the conquered Chewa people, whom Mpezeni had dispossessed.[2] Weise was at this time at Mpezeni's with one or two Portuguese traders and officials, making hay while the sun shone.

[1] 'Finding Mpezeni obdurate the British South Africa Company concluded treaties with all the surrounding indigenous chiefs whom Mpezeni had dispossessed. We consequently declined to acknowledge him as ruling chief.'

[2] F.O. 6337.

10: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1959
FRS Ngoni FRS
Mpezeni

The councillors and assessors are nominated by the chiefs on the advice of their lieutenants and some of them are in fact lieutenants or their sons. The court clerk acts as secretary to his chief if he is literate, and he assists the chief in his contacts with the Administration. These clerks are also sometimes sons of lieutenants or brothers of chiefs. One of the tasks of the court clerk is to issue licences of all kinds, for guns, beer selling, bicycles, dogs, and so on. This brings him into contact with many people and he does a certain amount of touring looking for unlicensed dogs and bicycles. Owing to this interest in licences and the running of the court, he is the person who takes the initiative in the few public prosecutions that are brought. Civil actions are initiated by paying deposits for a summons, which is usually issued by the court clerk. He is thus well informed of quarrels in advance before they come up for hearing in the court. He is well known throughout the county and exercises a great deal of influence. 647 [693]

Chiefs and People

Whenever beer was brewed in a village, there was an obligation to carry one pot to the chief, and this obligation persists. Apart from this, however, there does not seem ever to have been any organized system of sending tribute to the chief. Mpezeni is said to have had a monopoly of all prisoners of war, but those who had taken the captives were frequently allowed to keep them themselves. This is mentioned as a specific privilege of regional governors. Nowadays the chiefs expect hospitality when they enter the villages, but they have little call on the services of their people. The little assistance they get locally is probably less valuable than the presents they are given by men who are away working or who have just returned. When the chiefs visit the mining towns they are offered money and clothes by Ngoni working there. 622 431 [273] [727]

The chiefs own a number of guns and lend these to people they can trust. All the chiefs organize their own hunts, which differ from the hunts of ordinary people in that all the animals killed belong to the chief, who should, however, give a leg to the killer of each animal. Attendance is compulsory for adult men in the villages that are called out on the hunt, although in practice there are always many absentees. These royal hunts do not usually involve a whole county, but only part of the county. They are useful in keeping down the number of predatory animals, and damage done to crops by wild pigs and baboons is sometimes attributed to the failure of the chief to organize enough hunts. 622 224 [911] [136]

10: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1959
FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

273 recipient usually takes the lead in praising, and his praise is chorused by the rest of the people in the hut.

The first jar, then, is divided by the owner himself and the bowlfuls are given to his village neighbours. The next jar is given to the headman or lieutenant of the village for division, and it is with the drinking of this jar that the party is held really to begin. The first bowl of this second jar is given by the divider of the beer back to the owner of the beer, who praises the divider before drinking. The second bowl goes to some other lieutenant or, if there is no other village lieutenant, to some important woman. Successive bowls go to other important people in the village. Subsequent jars are usually given to important visitors from other villages, who will allocate the bowls to their companions and to people in the host village. The first bowl of each jar goes to the divider of the jar, and the dregs, which are usually taken as the two last bowlfuls in each jar, and which are poured out after the jar has been tilted on its side, go to the dispenser of the beer, and to anyone who has been helping him.

There is a great deal of freedom in the allocation of beer in this way, and the complaints of people who hoped to be given beer and who were unfortunate are an invariable aftermath of any beer-party. It is important to note that the quantity of beer consumed by any individual is to some extent independent of the allocation of the jars and bowls. There are usually two or three bowls in use, and these are all filled up at each round. This means that most people in the hut drink each time. But what is remembered is not the beer drunk, but the method of allocation. Even if a man becomes intoxicated, he may yet complain the next day to his friends that the owner of the beer was miserly and lacking in generosity if no jar or bowl was specifically allocated to him. There is an obligation to return gifts of beer made in
● [431] this way, so that a man can ensure a favourable reception for himself in other villages where there is beer, by his generosity and sagacity in distributing when there is beer in his own house.

262 273 The importance attached to beer-drinking is well brought out in some essays written by schoolboys on the topic 'What I want to do when I leave school'. One of the boys wrote: 'Beer and cattle are the food of the Ngoni. . . . If your friend comes and he doesn't get beer and meat, then although he gets porridge, he still says that there was hunger in the house.' Another said: 'I will brew beer very often. Our life depends on drinking beer.' The small importance attached to beer
[829] by the neighbouring Cewa tribe is well known to the Ngoni, and one